

# Grammar Teaching through Grammar Translation Method

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## ABSTRACT

this article deals with presenting information about methods, and language acquisition based on grammar teaching. There is given some more instructions to abide by teaching grammar.

**KEYWORDS:** phraseology, grammar translation, practice, English, language acquisition

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## INTRODUCTION:

The Grammar Translation Method is the oldest method of teaching in India. It is as old as the international of English in the country. A number of methods and techniques have been evolved for the teaching of English and also other foreign languages in the recent past, yet this method is still in use in many part of India. It maintains the mother tongue of the learner as the reference particularly in the process of learning the second/foreign languages. The main principles on which the Grammar Translation Method is based are the following:

1. Translation interprets the words and phrases of the foreign languages in the best possible manner.
2. The phraseology and the idiom of the target language can best be assimilated in the process of interpretation.
3. The structures of the foreign languages are best learnt when compared and contrast with those of mother tongue [3].

## Methods

In this methodology, whereas teaching the text book the teacher interprets each word, phrase from English into the natural language of learners. Further, students are needed to translate sentences from their natural language into English. These exercises in translation are supported numerous things covering the descriptive linguistics of the target language. The strategy emphasizes the study of descriptive linguistics through deduction that's through the study of the principles of descriptive linguistics. A contrastive study of the target language with the natural language offers associate insight into the structure not solely

of the foreign language however conjointly of the natural language.

## Advantages:

1. The phraseology of the target language is quickly explained. Translation is the easiest way of explaining meanings or words and phrases from one language into another. Any other method of explaining vocabulary items in the second language is found time consuming. A lot of time is wasted if the meanings of lexical items are explained through definitions and illustrations in the second language. Further, learners acquire some short of accuracy in understanding synonyms in the source language and the target language.
2. Teacher's labour is saved. Since the textbooks are taught through the medium of the mother tongue, the teacher may ask comprehension questions on the text taught in the mother tongue. Pupils will not have much difficulty in responding to questions on the mother tongue. So, the teacher can easily assess whether the students have learnt what he has taught them. Communication between the teacher and the learners does not cause linguistic problems. Even teachers who are not fluent in English can teach English through this method. That is perhaps the reason why this method has been practiced so widely and has survived so long.

## Disadvantages:

1. It is an unnatural method. The natural order of learning a language is listening, speaking, reading and writing.

That is the way how the child learns his mother tongue in natural surroundings. But in the Grammar Translation Method the teaching of the second language starts with the teaching of reading. Thus, the learning process is reversed. This poses problems.

2. Speech is neglected. The Grammar Translation Method lays emphasis on reading and writing. It neglects speech. Thus, the students who are taught English through this method fail to express themselves adequately in spoken English. Even at the undergraduate stage they feel shy of communicating through English. It has been observed that in a class, which is taught English through this method, learners listen to the mother tongue more than that to the second/foreign language. Since language learning involves habit formation such students fail to acquire habit of speaking English. Thus, they have to pay a heavy price for being taught through this method.
3. Exact translation is not possible. Translation is, indeed, a difficult task and exact translation from one language to another is not always possible. A language is the result of various customs, traditions, and modes of behavior of a speech community and these traditions differ from community to community. There are several lexical items in one language, which have no synonyms/equivalents in another language. For instance, the meaning of the English word 'table' does not fit in such expression as the 'table of contents', 'table of figures', 'multiplication table', 'time table' and 'table the resolution', etc. English prepositions are also difficult to translate. Consider sentences such as 'We see with our eyes', 'Bombay is far from Delhi', 'He died of cholera', 'He succeeded through hard work'. In these sentences 'with', 'from', 'of', 'through' can be translated into the Hindi preposition 'se' and vice versa. Each language has its own structure, idiom and usage, which do not have their exact counterparts in another language. Thus, translation should be considered an index of one's proficiency in a language.
4. It does not give pattern practice. A person can learn a language only when he internalizes its patterns to the extent that they form his habit. But the Grammar Translation Method does not provide any such practice to the learner of a language. It rather attempts to teach language through rules and not by use. Researchers in linguistics have proved that to speak any language, whether native or foreign entirely by rule is quite impossible. Language learning means acquiring certain skills, which can be learnt through practice and not by just memorizing rules. The persons who have learnt a foreign or second language through this method find it difficult to give up the habit of first thinking in their mother tongue and then translating their ideas into the second language. They, therefore, fail to get proficiency in the second language approximating that in the first language. The method, therefore, suffers from certain weaknesses for which there is no remedy.

## Results and discussion

The Advantages of the Grammar-Translation Method:

The following are the advantages of the Translation Method for teaching of English as second language:

1. It is an easy method:

In this method the child proceeds from the known to unknown. He already knows his mother tongue and now he learns the English equivalents.

2. It helps in building vocabulary:

Translation method helps in the rapid expansion of vocabulary of the students as it avoids difficult definitions or lengthy explanations. The vocabulary is economically and effectively acquired. Students get the exact meanings of words.

3. It saves teacher's labor:

The teacher finds it very easy to prepare his lesson. He has not to think of the ways and means to explain new words. It doesn't require the teacher to make use of audio-visual aids.

4. Comprehension is easily tested:

Students' comprehension of English, especially at the early stages can be easily tested by asking them to answer questions in the mother tongue.

5. Grammar is easily taught:

Grammar of the foreign language is easily taught by comparing it with the grammar of the mother tongue.

The Disadvantages of the Grammar-Translation Method:

The disadvantages of the translation method are as under:

1. It is an unnatural method:

In the translation method, the teacher starts teaching English to the students by teaching them reading first. But while learning his mother tongue the child learns first to understand spoken English and then speaking. The natural order of learning a language is listening, speaking, reading and writing. Translation method doesn't follow this method.

2. It neglects speech:

Translation method neglects speech no much attention is paid to oral work or drill work in this method. Besides this there is little ear-training as the teacher speaks the mother tongue most of the time.

3. It neglects pattern practice:

There is no pattern practice in the translation method. The result is that students aren't able to speak English correctly.

4. It ignores habit formation:

Because of its neglect of speech and pattern practice. Translation method ignores habit formation. 'The child never acquires the habit to think in English. Instead first he thinks in his mother tongue and translates his thoughts into English.

5. Exact translation is not possible:

Language is the result of the history, tradition, culture and the life of the people speaking them. That is why they can't translate exactly from one language to another.

6. Idiomatic expressions are difficult to translate:

The idiomatic expressions are hard to translate aptly. One is likely to translate literally and absurdly.

7. It teaches English by rules:

Translation method tries to teach English by rules rather than by use.

8. It makes the student a passive listener:

In the translation method the student isn't an active participant in the teaching learning process. He is passive listener.

9. It is uninteresting:

Translation method is dull and mechanical. It is bookish. No aids are used to make lessons interesting. It reduces the learning of a living language to that of a dead language [4].

#### **The advantages of the Grammar-Translation Method:**

In Grammar-Translation Method, the first language is maintained as the reference system in the learning of the second language. Translation from one language to another plays a certain part in language learning. In the Grammar-Translation Method, comparison between two languages helps students to have a better understanding of the meaning of abstract words and complicated sentences. Systematic study of grammatical rules plays an important role in fostering students' ability of reading comprehension and producing grammatically correct sentences. It has special importance for students in teachers' colleges for whom a good mastery of the grammar system of the target language. Understanding and manipulating the morphology and syntax will develop students' ability of analyzing and solving problems. The focus on understanding literary texts provides the situation in which reading and writing abilities are well trained. The Grammar-Translation makes few demands on teachers although it often creates frustration for students.

#### **Disadvantages of the Grammar-Translation Method**

Overemphasis on translation can never emancipate the learners from dependence on the first language. The Grammar-Translation puts too much emphasis on reading and writing and neglects listening and speaking. Knowing a large number of grammatical rules cannot ensure that students can use them appropriately in real communicative situation. In the Grammar-Translation Method, the texts are mostly taken from literary works. The language learned often doesn't meet the practical needs of the learners. Memorizing grammar rules and bilingual word lists does not motivate students to actively communicate in the target language.

#### **Criticism of the term**

The overall concept of grammar-translation has been criticized due to a lack of verifiable sources that supported the existence of such a method in the nineteenth century, or earlier.

#### **Conclusion**

There are two main goals to grammar-translation classes. One is to develop students' reading ability to a level where they can read literature in the target language. The other is to develop students' general mental discipline. The users of foreign language wanted simply to note things of their interest in the literature of foreign languages. Therefore, this method focuses on reading and writing and has developed techniques which facilitate more or less the learning of reading and writing only. As a result, speaking and listening are overlooked.

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